

HEALTH
A-5 SEP 1945
C.R. 37

Shepton Mallet Rural District Council.

Annual Report
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health

For the Year ended 31st December, 1944.

WINCANTON,

SOMERSET.

July, 1945.

TO THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SHEPTON MALLET.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to lay before you my Annual Report for the year 1944.

1.—GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (in acres)	47,784
Population (1944)	10,730
Number of Inhabited Houses (1943)	3,081
Rateable Value	£44,168
Produce of a Penny Rate (estimated)	£184



2.—EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

BIRTHS.

LIVE BIRTHS :—		Males.	Females.	
Total	...	108	105	
Legitimate	...	97	102	
Illegitimate	...	11	3	Birth Rate : 17.6.

STILLBIRTHS :—				
Total	...	3	1	
Legitimate	...	1	1	
Illegitimate	...	2	0	Birth Rate : 0.50.

DEATHS.

	Total.	Males.	Females.	
Deaths from all causes :—	115	57	58	Death Rate 12.1.
Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, childbirth :—				
(a) From Sepsis	0			
(b) From other causes	1			

Deaths of Infants under one year of age :—
Legitimate, 10. Illegitimate 0. Total 10.

Deaths of Infants under One Week	...	...	1
“ “ “ from One to Four Weeks (inclusive)	...	...	4
“ “ “ from One to Six Months	...	...	4
“ “ “ from Six to Twelve Months	...	...	1
Total	...	...	10

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	0
“ “ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	0
“ “ Diarrhoea (under two years)	...	...	1

There has not been any excessive mortality during the year.
The total number of Deaths occurring in the District was 115, compared with 134 in 1943.

The chief causes of Death were :—

Heart Disease	...	...	26
Cancer	...	...	23
Cerebral Haemorrhage	...	...	12
Old Age	...	...	12
In these four “ Causes of Death ” :—			
Those dying between the ages of 75 and 80 were	...	...	21
“ “ “ “ 81 and 85 “	...	...	13
“ “ “ “ 86 and 90 “	...	...	6
And dying above the aged of 90	...	...	1

A total of 41 or 35.65% of the total Deaths.

3.—NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to the Isolation Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Diphtheria ...	2	2	0
Scarlet Fever ...	18	16	0
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	6	0	0
Pneumonia (all forms) ...	4	0	3
Whooping Cough ...	31	4	0
Measles ...	48	0	0
Cerebro Spinal Meningitis ...	1	0	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	1	0	0
Dysentery ...	1	0	0
Erysipelas ...	2	1	1
Tuberculosis ...	11	0	2
(a) Respiratory ...	9	0	0
(b) Non-respiratory ...	2	0	2
	136	23	8

The Notification of Infectious Diseases in the District by Medical Practitioners was satisfactory, except in the cases of Pneumonia.

The under-mentioned School was closed owing to the prevalence of Infectious Disease :—
Pylle for Measles and Whooping Cough, in July.

4.—OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.

Notified.	Cases Treated		Vision		Total	Deaths.
	At Home.	In Hospital.	Unimpaired.	Impaired.	Blindness.	
1	1	0	1	0	0	0

5.—CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

Measles and Whooping Cough were somewhat in evidence throughout the District. The type of both diseases was mild and there were no deaths. There was a mild epidemic of Influenza in the early part of the year, the great majority of the cases were of short duration and complete recovery was the rule, and there were no deaths attributed to this disease.

Pneumonia caused 3 deaths.

6.—SUMMARY OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE IN THE DISTRICT.

A.—PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME :—

- (1) General :—There are 9 nurses in the District engaged in general district work, who are affiliated to the County Nursing Association, and between them they cover the whole District.
- (2) For Infectious Diseases :—Some of the cases of Infectious Disease were removed to the Joint Isolation Hospital, the remainder were either nursed by their relatives or by nurses obtained from Nursing Homes or Hospitals outside the District.

B.—MIDWIVES.

There are 9 certified Midwives practising in the District.

C.—CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

None in the District.

D.—HOSPITALS SITUATED IN THE DISTRICT.

None.

The following cases were admitted to the Shepton Mallet Joint Isolation Hospital from the District during the year :—

	Number Admitted.	Number Died.
Scarlet Fever ...	16	0
Diphtheria ...	2	0
Whooping Cough ...	4	0
Chicken Pox ...	3	0
Erysipelas ...	1	1

D.—INSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR UNMARRIED MOTHERS, ILLEGITIMATE INFANTS AND HOMELESS CHILDREN.

None.

F.—AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

- (1) For Infectious Cases. The trailer ambulance kept at the Joint Isolation Hospital, Shepton Mallet, is used in the District for the collection and removal of infectious cases. This machine is not satisfactory, and it is hoped to replace it by an ambulance in the near future.
- (2) For non-infectious cases and accidents. The Motor Ambulance provided by The Shepton Mallet Urban District Council, and kept at The Wells Road Garage (Tel. 126), is used when necessary.

G.—INSTITUTIONS FOR EVACUATED CHILDREN.

The Springfield Hostel at Evercreech, which accommodates 28 children.
The Mayfair Hostel and the Darshill Sick Bay, both situated in the Shepton Mallet Urban District, are administered by the Shepton Mallet Rural District Council.

H.—SCABIES.

There have been several cases of Scabies in the District. Most of them have been treated in one of the Sick Bays in the County. A few have been treated at home by their own Doctor. There has been no occasion to have recourse to The Scabies Order, 1941.

7.—LABORATORY WORK.

Examinations of bacteriological and pathological specimens are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory at Taunton, and considerable use of this Laboratory has been made during the year.

A supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin is kept at the Isolation Hospital, Shepton Mallet, and is supplied free on demand to Practitioners practising in the District.

8.—PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.

There is one Sanitary Inspector, one Assistant Sanitary Inspector, and one Sanitary Surveyor (all whole-time officers), and myself (a part-time officer).

There are two Health Visitors in the District.

9.—WATER SUPPLIES.

DITCHEAT.—900 yards of 4" main have been laid between the source at Milton Clevedon and the Storage Reservoir at Milton Hill, and a further 900 yards of 4" main have been laid between Longhill Farm and the Ditchheat Service Reservoir. These two lengths of main improve the collection of water at the source and the control of the system.

FARNCOMBE.—664 yards of 3" main have been laid at Prestleigh to link up the Farncombe System with Evercreech as an improvement on the existing 2" link main.

10.—DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

No works executed or changes made.

CAMPING SITES :

No Camping Sites in this District have been registered.

Generally the only cases of Camping which occurred were of 2 or 3 days duration.

11.—HOUSING.

There is some overcrowding partly due to War-time conditions. There is a great shortage of houses and although the Council have prepared a Building Programme covering the whole District, this cannot be commenced until labour and materials are available.

The six agricultural cottages allocated to this District under the recent building programme of the Ministry of Health have been completed, four at Evercreech and two at Ditchheat.

12.—MINISTRY OF HEALTH ENQUIRIES.

None.

13.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) MILK SUPPLY :

(1)	Number of Producers on the Register	...	...	375
	(a) Designated	...	...	181
	(b) Other	...	...	194
(2)	Number of Distributors on the Register	...	...	62
	(a) Number of Distributors who are also Producers	...	...	61
	(b) Number of Distributors only	...	...	1
(3)	Number of Producers of Designated Milk	...	...	181
	(a) Accredited	...	...	129
	(b) T.T.	...	...	52
	(c) Pastenrised	...	...	0

(b) MEAT SUPERVISION :

Slaughter Houses :—

Licensed, but now unused, owing to War-time restrictions	7
Ministry of Food Slaughter House	1
Knackers Yard Licensed	1

14.—AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS.

There is no Rescue Party in the District, but one or both of the Rescue Parties situated in the Shepton Mallet Urban District would function in the Rural District in case of need.

A Dressing Station has been formed in every village in the District. They are staffed by an Officer in Charge (who is a lady with experience in First-Aid and Home Nursing) and a varying number of helpers ; equipment has been provided by The County Council, The British Red Cross Society, and by local effort.

Mrs. Williams, Hornblotton House, Castle Cary (Commandant Som. 72) has under her charge Dressing Stations in 16 villages in the District. Mrs. Addleshaw, Windyridge, Compton Road, Shepton Mallet (Commandant Som. 78), has under her charge Dressing Stations in 10 villages in the District. Mrs. Leadbitter, Flint House, Holcombe, Bath (Commandant Som. 148) has under her charge Dressing Stations in 3 villages in the District.

The following facts have been reported to me by The Sanitary Inspector and The Engineer :—

WATER SUPPLIES AND SEWERAGE ACT, 1944.

In November a start was made on the preparation of schemes deemed suitable for submission under this Act.

CHLORINATION :

All water supplied to parishes of Ditcheat, Evercreech, Holcombe, Milton Clevedon, Pilton and Stoke St. Michael, was chlorinated throughout the year at .3 p.p.m.

Water supplied to parts of the parish of Ashwick and the parishes of Emborough, Binegar, and Stratton-on-the-Fosse, was chlorinated continuously.

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES :

Number of Samples taken	...	...	...	...	39
Satisfactory	...	...	...	...	26
Not quite satisfactory	...	...	...	...	11
Unsatisfactory	...	...	...	...	2

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES :

Number of Samples taken	...	...	...	...	13
Satisfactory	...	...	...	...	7
Not quite satisfactory	...	...	...	...	4
Unsatisfactory	...	...	...	...	2

WATER SHORTAGES :

Public Water Supplies :

Serious shortage of water occurred in the parishes of Ditcheat, Evercreech and Pilton.

The supply to Ditcheat was restricted from 31/5/44 to 19/10/44.

The supply to Evercreech was restricted from 10/7/44 to 19/10/44.

The supply to Pilton was restricted from 22/7/44 to 19/10/44.

The shortages were due to the three “dry” years, 1942, 1943 and 1944 ; the yield of the springs fell rapidly from the end of March and by the end of September was approximately half of the March yield. The heavy rain which fell after 17/10/44, very quickly restored the yield which by mid-November was normal.

In addition to the shortages above enumerated the effect of the dry period was felt in all parishes ; at Hornblotton in particular the shortage was extremely serious, but in this case the position was aggravated by the bad condition of the privately owned distribution mains.

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES :

There was a shortage at The Cranmore Hall Estate during the summer as usual.

SEWERAGE :

No alterations to or renewals of any public sewers or sewage disposal systems were carried out during the year.

Plans approved during the year for new private drainage works were as follows :—

Septic Tanks	...	...	...	...	5
Sullage Water Disposal by irrigation	...	...	...	...	3
Connections to existing sewers	...	...	...	...	11
Earth Closets	...	...	...	...	1

HOUSING :

GENERAL POSITION.—There is a general shortage of houses. The general condition of houses deteriorated as a result of war years, lack of labour and material.

STATUTORY ACTION.—Nil.

INFORMAL ACTION.—25 houses made fit under Housing and Public Health Acts.

OVERCROWDING.—Two serious cases were abated. There are estimated to be a number of cases in the district which cannot readily be abated, some being due to unofficial evacuation and other war-time causes.

POST-WAR HOUSING.—The number of houses approved for the first-year building programme in each parish were as follows :—

Ashwick 4, Holcombe 4, Evercreech 3, Stoke Lane 4,
Pilton 2, Stratton-on-the-Fosse 6. Total 23.

HOUSING SURVEY.—Following the issue of the Hobhouse Report on Rural Housing, the village of Croscombe was surveyed thoroughly and a report issued to the Council. No further villages were dealt with during the year, pending the decisions of the County Committee regarding Standards to be adopted, survey procedure, etc.

Number of unfit houses licenced for human habitation	...	31
Number of houses, other than the Hostel, requisitioned by the Council for the use of Evacuated Persons	...	61
Bed Bug Infestation : No case reported	...	...

Three houses were disinfested of fleas, and five after cases of scabies.

The routine disinfection of premises after cases of Infectious Disease was carried out in 31 cases.

The bedding in all these cases has been taken to The Joint Isolation Hospital for disinfection.

SANITARY ACCOMMODATION IN HOUSES.—There have been few alterations or improvements.

HOUSE REFUSE COLLECTIONS :

These are made fortnightly at Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Ashwick, Binegar, Emborough, Holcombe, Stoke Lane, Evercreech and Ditcheat, and monthly at Croscombe.

SALVAGE :

The Salvage scheme has yielded good results during the year, as the following figures shew :—

				Value.		
				£	s.	d.
			Tons.	Cwts.		
Paper	...	...	69	1	510	0 0
Ferrous Metals	...	...	92	5	184	0 0
Non-ferrous Metals	...	...		7½	8	5 0
Rags	...	...	10	0½	90	0 0
Bottles and Jars	...	...	11	6	83	15 0
Rubber	...	...	3	18	12	5 0
Bones	...	...	7	14	44	5 0
				194	12	
Total Value				£932/10/0.		

MILK SUPPLIES : This district was second in the placings of the 16 Rural Districts within the County.

Number of Samples taken	...	...	203.	Number unsatisfactory.
Accredited	...	...	143.	... 35 (24.5%).
T.T.	...	...	60	... 16 (26.6%).

Nine herds were tested for T.B., one being found positive.

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION :

At the Ministry of Food Slaughterhouse, Pylle, the following carcasses were examined during the year :—

Cattle	...	...	...	2,764
Calves	...	...	...	11,548
Sheep	...	...	...	10,183
Pigs	...	...	...	532
Total	...	...	...	25,027

Particulars of Meat condemned :—

			Beef.	Veal.	Mutton.	Pork.
Whole Carcase	...	...	269	16	22	10
Quarters	...	...	63	—	—	—
Part Quarters	...	...	9	—	—	—
Heads	...	...	576	20	—	21
Livers	...	...	953	—	627	—
Plucks	...	...	—	50	31	25
Lungs	...	...	1043	—	10	—
Spleens, Skirts, Intestines,						
Mesenteries, etc.	...	...	1745	—	54	25

A total of 5,565 items, weighing 67 tons 3 cwts., without tripes, gut, etc.

REASONS FOR CONDEMNATION.—BEEF : Main cause T.B., with smaller proportions of Dropsy and emaciation, and septicæmia. PORK AND VEAL : Mainly T.B. MUTTON : Parasitic infestation and/or dropsy and emaciation.

OTHER FOODS.—Small quantities of tinned and other foods have been condemned in shops and stores.

GOVERNMENT EVACUATION SCHEME

	U.D.	R.D.	Total.
Number of Official Evacuees at beginning of year	284	630	914
Number of Official Evacuees at end of year	373	952	1,325

The increase was due to the “ V ” weapon raids.

HOSTELS .— “ Mayfair,” Charlton Road, Shepton Mallet. 24 beds. Mixed sexes, under 11 years.
“ Springfield,” Evercreech. 28 beds. Boys over 11 years.

SICK BAY. —“ Darshill,” Bowlish, Shepton Mallet. 12 beds. Skin and other minor infections.

RATS AND MICE (DESTRUCTION) ACT, 1919 :—

The No. 1 Workable Area Committee was formed with nine other Local Authorities collectively to employ operators and deal with the problem. The combined scheme went through many vicissitudes, but finally settled down to four authorities (of which we were one), employing one man one week each per month.

Number of Infestations dealt with	...	...	...	27
Estimated Kill, Ministry Formula	...	...	...	2760
Actual number of bodies recovered	...	...	...	690

GAS DECONTAMINATION SERVICE :—A squad of 12 has been organised to act if required. The organisation of this squad is difficult as the personnel is continuously changing.

Buildings reserved for airing of Gas contamination Food :—

Messrs. Harris’ unused Slaughterhouse at Evercreech Junction.

EMERGENCY MORTUARY ACCOMMODATION :—

Adequate arrangements have been made at 13 places in the District.

PLANS :—

25 presented ; all approved.

5 Certificates of Essentiality issued covering work to the total value of £810.

I have the honour to be, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

T. E. COULSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

